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EXCHANGING GLADIATORS FOR AN AQUEDUCT AT APHRODISIAS (*SEG* 50.1096)*

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ABSTRACT

A letter of Hadrian to the magistrates, council, and people of Aphrodisias (*SEG* 50.1096) has been interpreted as evidence that nominees for the high priesthood became reluctant to assume the office, when the traditional liturgy of sponsoring gladiatorial shows was replaced by a financial contribution towards the building of an aqueduct. This article proposes that, instead, the nominees' reluctance was caused by the burden of providing gladiators, and that the alternative of contributing to the aqueduct was intended as a more attractive option to boost the pool of available candidates.

Introduction

Excavations at Aphrodisias in 1994 turned up fragments of a single slab of marble that had been re-used as a paving-stone. The upper face contained the text of four letters written by Hadrian to the magistrates, council, and people of Aphrodisias. The third letter, which can be dated by the emperor's titles to AD 125, runs as follows:¹

ἐπὶ Κλαυδίου Ὑψικλέους ἥρωος. Αὐτοκράτωρ Καῖσαρ [Θ]εοῦ Τραιανοῦ
Παρθικοῦ υἱός, θεοῦ Νέρουα υἱωνός, Τραιανός Ἀδριανός Σεβαστός,
ἀρχιερεὺς μέγιστος, δημαρχικῆς ἐξουσίας τὸ ἕνατον, ὕπατος τὸ
τρίτον. Ἀφροδισιέων τοῖς ἀρχουσι καὶ τῇ βουλῇ καὶ τῷ δήμῳ
χαίρειν. τοὺς πόρους οὓς ἀπετάξατε εἰς τὴν τοῦ ὕδατος καταγωγὴν
βεβαιῶ. ἐπεὶ δὲ ἦσαν τινες πολεῖται ὑμέτεροι λέγοντες εἰς
ἀρχιερωσύνην ἀδύνατοι ὄντες προβεβλῆσθαι, ἀνέπεμψα αὐτοὺς ἐφ'
ὕμᾱς ἐξετάσαντας πρότερον δύνατοι ὄντες λειτουργεῖν διαδύονται, ἢ
ἀληθῆ λέγουσιν. εἰ μέντοι φαίνονται τινες αὐτῶν εὐπορώτεροι,

* This contribution about a Greek inscription that touches on a meta-theatrical topic is offered in honour of Piet Conradie, expert in Greek drama and respected member of the Classical Association of South Africa (Western Cape branch). I am most grateful to Christopher Jones for assistance and encouragement.

¹ Text and translation (with the addition of the emperor's full titulature) from Reynolds 2000 = *SEG* 50.1096 = *AE* 2000, 1441.

προτέρους ἐκείνους ἀρχιεράσθαι δίκαιον. συνχωρῶ ὑμῖν παρὰ τῶν ἀρχιερέων ἀντὶ μονομαχιῶν ἀργύριον λαμβάνειν, καὶ οὐ συνχωρῶ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπαινῶ τὴν γνώμην, οἱ αἰρεθησόμενοι ὑφ' ὑμῶν ἐπιμελεῖται τοῦ ὑδραγωγίου περὶ ὧν ἂν γνώμης δέονται καὶ συλλήψεως δυνήσονται τῷ ἐπιτρόπῳ Πομπηίῳ Σεβήρῳ ἐντυγχάνειν, ὃ καὶ γὰρ γέγραφα. εὐτυχεῖτε.

In (the *stephanephorate* of) Claudius Hypsikles, *heros*. The emperor Caesar Trajan Hadrian Augustus, son of the deified Trajan Parthicus, grandson of the deified Nerva, *pontifex maximus*, holding *tribunicia potestas* for the ninth time, consul for the third time, greets the magistrates, council, and people of Aphrodisias. The funds which you have reserved for the aqueduct I confirm. And since there are certain of your citizens who say that they have been nominated for the high priesthood when they are incapable of undertaking it, I have referred them to you to examine whether² they are able to undertake the liturgy and are evading it, or are telling the truth; if, however, some of them were to appear to be better off, it is fair that they should hold the high priesthood first. I concede that you should take money from the high priests instead of gladiatorial shows; not only do I concede but I praise your proposal. The supervisors who will be chosen by you for the water-channel will be able to get advice and help on those matters on which they need them from my procurator Pompeius Severus, to whom I have written. Farewell.

The editor of the *editio princeps*, Joyce Reynolds, interprets this letter as evidence that the high priests at Aphrodisias were reluctant to give up funding gladiatorial shows in order to contribute to the aqueduct, summing up as follows: ‘Certainly Hadrian seems to me to associate the unwillingness of the recusants with the diversion of money from gladiators to water-supply’.³ She concedes that the shows were expensive, but stresses the prestige that accrued to their sponsors. She points out that, whether they funded an aqueduct or gladiators, the priests still had to shoulder a financial burden, but she suggests that the shows might accommodate ‘some unobtrusive cost-cutting’, in contrast to a fixed contribution to the aqueduct. This interpretation is followed by the author of a subsequent contribution, Domitilla Campanile, who answers Reynolds’s doubts about the necessity of obtaining imperial permission for such a scheme by stressing that the close link

² Translating Reynolds’s emendation ἐξετάσοντας πότερον for the phrase ἐξετάσαντας πρότερον on the stone, which is neither good Greek nor good sense: see Reynolds 2000:16-17.

³ Reynolds 2000:19.

between gladiatorial shows and the imperial cult would make it imperative for the city to gain Hadrian's permission before commuting the liturgy.⁴

This interpretation is cogent, but I believe that another is possible. In what follows, I propose instead that, in relation to the dearth of nominees for the high priesthood in Aphrodisias, contributions to the aqueduct were not the problem but the solution.

Hadrian's letter

After the initial greeting, Hadrian addresses four points in his letter: in the first sentence he ratifies the spending of the funds collected for the aqueduct; in the next two sentences he instructs the city to investigate the finances of nominees to the priesthood who claim that their resources are inadequate to the office, so that those who are able to afford it should be made to take it on; in the fourth sentence he endorses the city's proposal to require priests to make a monetary contribution instead of sponsoring gladiatorial shows; and in the final sentence he refers the project-managers to the procurator for technical assistance.

A letter from an emperor responding to requests, complaints, or honorific gestures from cities can cover a large number of topics, according to the agenda set by the ambassadors or civic documents to which he was replying.⁵ On this basis, one need not assume a consistent thread among the disparate topics in a single letter. But, as has been noted by Joyce Reynolds, our letter does not mention an embassy or civic overture from Aphrodisias, as the other three letters do, and plunges into the matter of the aqueduct as though 'continuing an exchange begun earlier'.⁶ Reynolds suggests that the exchange had been started by the ambassador named in the fourth letter, which mentions the term ὕδατος καταγωγή and is dated to the previous year; if this man, in the meantime deceased (ἥρως), had asked Hadrian for help in constructing the aqueduct and been told to find a way of raising funds for it, our letter might be a response to the scheme that he came up with before his death.

In the second sentence, δέ, introducing the problem of candidates who are trying to dodge the priesthood, is too weak a connective to imply any logical association with the previous statement about funds collected for the aqueduct. There is therefore no *a priori* reason to assume that in our letter the

⁴ Campanile 2001:138, summarized at *SEG* 51.1491.

⁵ For examples from letters composed by Claudius in response to ambassadors from Alexandria and Thasos, which probably preserve the order in which the issues had been presented by the original embassies, see Millar 1977:413.

⁶ Reynolds 2000:17.

revenues that are said to have been set aside for the aqueduct at Aphrodisias derived from the commutation of the liturgy incumbent upon the high priests. πόροι is a general word for ‘resources’, ‘ways and means’,⁷ and these funds had already been ear-marked (ἀποτάσσω is a Hellenistic budgeting term⁸) when Hadrian wrote the letter. Rather than identifying the πόροι of the first sentence with the ἀργύριον of the fourth, it is possible to understand a two-stage scheme for funding the aqueduct: the city put aside some unspecified resources, and further contributions were to be raised by commuting the liturgy attached to the priesthood. Cobbling together funds from different sources is likely to have been the default method for raising large capital sums. There is a parallel for this two-pronged approach in the scheme introduced by L. Memmius Rufus, proconsul of Macedonia in the first half of the second century, to support the gymnasium at Beroea, which kept having to close for lack of funds; from a combination of funds previously bequeathed to the city by prominent citizens (their names and the amounts of their bequests are listed) and annual revenue from water-mills (ὕδρομηχαναί), he created a capital fund of 100,000 *denarii* that was calculated to yield interest at 6% to cover the running-costs (*SEG* 48.742 = *IBeroia* 7).

When Hadrian agrees to the proposal that the priests should pay a financial contribution (ἀργύριον) rather than sponsoring gladiatorial displays, it is just that: a proposal (γνώμη). Hence, it does not seem necessary to assume, with Reynolds, that candidates’ reluctance to accept nomination for the priesthood arose from their being compelled to contribute to the aqueduct. Rather, it may have been the cost of sponsoring gladiatorial shows that was at the root of their reluctance to occupy the position of ἀρχιερεὺς, in which case the alternative of a financial contribution to a civic project was presumably intended as a more attractive option to sustain the pool of candidates.⁹

⁷ πόρος, from πείρω, ‘pass through’, means, fundamentally, ‘way’ or ‘crossing’ (*LSJ*).

⁸ Reynolds 2000:17 n. 8, with bibliography.

⁹ This interpretation is implied, but not articulated, by Carter 2003:85, commenting on Hadrian’s letter in the context of Marcus Aurelius’ attempt to keep down the cost of gladiators: ‘the Emperor Hadrian tentatively absolved certain local chief priests of the imperial cult (ἀρχιερεῖς) from the office because they claimed to be unable to fulfil the costly obligations of the position’. Carter does not specify the content of Hadrian’s letter or mention Reynolds’s interpretation.

Channelling munificence

Civic munificence in the Roman Empire involved a delicate balance between, on the one hand, the provision of spectacles and other ephemera and, on the other, contributions to the physical fabric of the ancient city. If the populace favoured the instant gratification of shows (and we cannot be sure that they always did), the city fathers had to take care of civic amenities, for which re-allocation of funds might sometimes be necessary. The bequests that Memmius allocated to save the gymnasium at Beroia may not have been intended by their donors to be spent on something else; but, in a case recorded by the jurist Valens under Hadrian or Antoninus Pius, the Senate ruled that money left to a community for a *venatio* and *spectacula* was not be used for that purpose, requiring it instead to be spent on public works (*Dig.* 50.8.6). Sometimes a testator left it to the beneficiary to choose between games and monuments, as with Iulius Largus of Pontus, who left money for the communities of Heraclea and Tium in trust to Pliny in his capacity as *legatus Augusti* to spend either on public buildings in honour of Trajan or on games bearing the emperor's name, as Pliny saw fit (Plin. *Epist.* 10.75.2).¹⁰

We seldom hear the reaction when one type of project was exchanged for the other, but crucial evidence survives in a mutilated passage of a letter from Hadrian's successor, Antoninus Pius, to the citizens of Ephesus in AD 145, endorsing the plans of a local grandee, Vedius Antoninus, to adorn the city with new buildings.¹¹ At least two other letters of Pius concerning the same man are inscribed alongside this one; together they constitute imperial μαρτυρίαι, 'letters of witness'. Such letters were normally composed in response to an honorific decree voted by a city to one of its citizens;¹² hence, as has recently been argued, we should assume that the Ephesians had voted a decree in honour of Vedius to which the emperor was adding his endorsement.¹³ Between the greeting and valediction, the text runs (ll. 7-18):

τὴν φιλοτιμίαν ἣν φιλοτιμεῖται]
[πρὸς ὑμᾶς Οὐήδιος Ἀντωνεῖνος ἔμαθον οὐχ οὕτω] ἐκ
τῶν ὑμετέρων γραμμάτων ὡς ἐκ τῶν [ἐκ]είνων βουλόμε-
10 νος γὰρ παρ' ἐμοῦ τυχεῖν βοηθείας [εἰς τὸν κόσμον τῶν
ἔργων ὧν ὑμεῖν ἐπηγγείλατο ἐδήλωσεν ὅσα καὶ ἡλίκα οἱ-

¹⁰ Pliny hastens to consult Trajan as to his preferences. For the suggestion that Largus deemed the emperor's emissary a less corruptible trustee than the civic authorities, see Mitchell 1987:348 n. 94.

¹¹ *SIG*³ 850 = *IEphesos* 1491 = Oliver 1989: no. 138.

¹² 54 examples survive; see the appendix compiled by Kokkinia 2003:207-13.

¹³ Kokkinia 2003:205, restoring the valedictory formula τὸ ψήφισμα ἔπε]μψεν at the end of the document in place of the traditional restoration τὰ γράμματα ἔπε]μψεν.

κοδομήματα προστίθουσιν τῇ πόλει ὑμῶν· ὑμεῖς οὐ[ν] ὀρθῶς ἀποδέχεσθε αὐτόν· καὶ συνέχωρησα αὐτῷ [...] ἃ ἡτήσατο καὶ ἀπεδεξάμην ὅτι [οὐ] τὸν πολλῶν τῶν πολιτευομένων τρόπον, οἱ τοῦ [παρ]αχρημ[α] εὐδοκιμεῖν χά-
15 [ρ]ιν εἰς θέα[ς] καὶ διανομὰς καὶ τὰ τῶν ἀγώνων θέματα δαπανῶ[σιν] [τῇ]ν φιλοτιμίαν, ἀλλὰ δι' οὐ πρὸς τὸ μέλλον ἐλπίζει σ[ε]μνο-
[τέραν ποιή]σειν τὴν πόλιν προήρη[ται].

I learned about Vedius Antoninus' munificence towards you, not so much from your letters as from his. For, wishing to receive assistance from me for the embellishment of the works he promised you, he told me how many great buildings he is adding to [your] city. You [therefore] act appropriately in commending him, and I myself have conceded [...] what he asked for and I have commended him. For he has not chosen the way of most people performing public services, who consume their munificence on spectacles, distributions and [contests] for the sake of their immediate reputation, but rather (a way) whereby [he hopes] to make the city more magnificent in the [future].

The traditional restoration at lines 12-13 of this inscription, προστίθουσιν τῇ πόλει· ἀλλ' ὑμεῖς οὐ[κ] ὀρθῶς ἀποδέχεσθε αὐτόν, i.e., 'he is adding to the city; you act inappropriately in failing to commend him', would imply a rebuke from the emperor to the Ephesians for insufficiently appreciating Vedius's contribution, and it has regularly been so interpreted.¹⁴ The restoration printed above at l. 12 has been generously suggested to me by Christopher Jones, building upon the recent breakthrough by Christina Kokkinia,¹⁵ who, recognising that such a rebuke would be inappropriate in a document publicly posted in the Ephesians' own city (on the proscenium of the *bouleuterion*, no less), realised that, instead of a contrast, an endorsement is required; she suggested either προστίθουσιν τῇ πόλει· ἀλλ' ὑμεῖς οὐ[ν] ἀποδέχεσθε αὐτόν, i.e., 'he is adding to the city; well then, you act appropriately in commending him', or προστίθουσιν τῇ πόλει· καὶ ὑμεῖς οὐ[ν] ἀποδέχεσθε αὐτόν, i.e., 'he is adding to the city; and you, therefore, act appropriately in commending him.' The restoration printed above, προστίθουσιν τῇ πόλει ὑμῶν· ὑμεῖς οὐ[ν] ἀποδέχεσθε αὐτόν, seems to me to lay suitable emphasis on 'you': 'he is adding to your city ... You, therefore, act appropriately in commending him.'

The old interpretation of this passage encouraged the idea of tension between the emperor, wanting to see the city fabric improved, and the citizenry, preferring games; the new interpretation shows that the citizens

¹⁴ Cf., e.g., Mitchell 1990:190; Zuiderhoek 2007:198.

¹⁵ Kokkinia 2003:204.

might also approve of benefactors who eschewed games in favour of building-projects. Admittedly, an earthquake at Ephesus three or four years previously had given both the city and the emperor good reason for this attitude; but Hadrian's monumental efforts to promote public building in Asia Minor¹⁶ may have likewise spurred the ambitions of a community such as Aphrodisias and supplied its civic authorities with an incentive to relieve the high priests of the burden imposed by the regular liturgy attached to the priesthood.

The financial burden of the high priesthood

Sponsoring shows and putting up public monuments were two of the most prominent functions of euergetism in the Roman world. The liturgical responsibility of putting on gladiatorial shows has, however, to be distinguished from the act of endowing an agonistic festival, such as the penteteric festival that C. Iulius Demosthenes endowed at Oenoanda under Hadrian in AD 124 (*SEG* 38.1462), whose regular celebration would perpetually remind the citizens of Demosthenes's generosity. While sponsoring a gladiatorial spectacle has an immediate, short-term benefit for the sponsor, endowing a festival or putting up a monument has a longer-term payoff. By the time he made his endowment, Demosthenes had retired from imperial service as a senior equestrian official; his endowment was a voluntary gift to his community from one of its most eminent citizens. Putting on a gladiatorial show as a duty incumbent upon a priest of the imperial cult, however, is a different matter. This was not voluntary; it was a requirement – one which earned the incumbent considerable popularity, but at great financial cost.

The dangers of fulfilling costly liturgies are exposed and condemned by two contemporary moralists: Plutarch, who survived into Hadrian's reign, and Dio Chrysostom, who was certainly still alive under Trajan and possibly survived into the reign of Hadrian. Plutarch, reflecting Platonic disapproval of currying popular favour, complains that people of limited means should not be ashamed to live within those means, and should not feel obliged to get into debt in order to fulfil liturgies, among which he specifically mentions gladiatorial shows; the honours that such displays of generosity earn he likens to flattery from a prostitute (*Praec. ger. reip.* 29 = *Mor.* 821F: αἱ δ' ἀπὸ θεάτρων ἢ νεμήσεων ἢ μονομάχων ψευδώνυμοι τιμαὶ καὶ ψευδομάρτυρες

¹⁶ Mitchell 1987:344-45 (providing materials from imperial sources), 346 (outright imperial grant), 351 (in response to local catastrophe), 353-54 (for projects of strictly public utility). For tables listing Hadrian's construction projects in cities throughout the Empire, see Boatwright 2000:109 (= Table 6.1: engineering projects and utilitarian structures), 110-11 (= Table 6.2: non-utilitarian public works).

ἑταιρικαῖς εἰκόσιν κολακείαις, ὅχλων αἰὲν τῷ διδόντι καὶ χαριζομένῳ προσμειδιόντων, ἐφήμερόν τινα καὶ ἀβέβαιον δόξαν), and he argues that it is ‘neither ignoble nor humiliating to refuse to borrow money and instead withdraw from the pool of people who can afford these liturgies’ (*Praec. ger. reip.* 31 = *Mor.* 822D: οὐτ’ ἀγγενὲς οὔτε ταπεινὸν οὐδὲν ἐστὶ πενίαν ὁμολογοῦντα ταῖς τῶν ἐχόντων ἐξίστασθαι φιλοτιμίαις). Dio Chrysostom, in high rhetorical style, speaks of people incompetent to manage even a village as it should be managed going in pursuit of crowns and preferential seating and purple robes (*Or.* 34.29-30: μηδὲ κόμην ὄντες ἱκανοὶ διοικῆσαι κατὰ τρόπον ... καὶ στεφάνους καὶ προεδρίας καὶ πορφύρας διώκοντες). Even allowing for the moral and rhetorical point that these authors are making, it is clear that people who had neither the means nor the ability to pursue public office were seduced by its trappings and prestige, and got into financial difficulties as a result.

Financial strain as a reason for exemption from a priesthood is attested under Pertinax, granting an exemption to a father of sixteen who had written to him from the East (*Dig.* 50.6.6.2). His successor, Septimius Severus, excused a father of five sons from serving as priest of the province of Asia, whereupon the benefit was extended to other provinces also (*Dig.* 50.5.8.*pr.*).¹⁷ A particular strain was imposed by the requirement that priests of the imperial cult were to provide gladiatorial displays. This stress starts to become evident from the reign of Antoninus Pius, who provided a subvention to enable L. Egnatius Inventus of Abella to reinstate a gladiatorial show after a lapse (*obliterato muneris spectaculo*); the subvention is described as having been granted *ab in[d]ulgen[tia] maximi principis* (*CIL* 10.1211 = *ILS* 5058).

The situation was so serious that legislation was tabled in AD 177 in the joint reign of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, capping the cost of gladiators in various categories. Part of a marble inscription containing the original proposal has been found at Sardis in the Roman province of Asia (commonly known as the *Marmor Sardonum*: *CIL* 3.7106 = *ILS* 9340); a much longer – though still incomplete – version on bronze, taking the form of a speech by the senator who expressed the *sententia prima* in the debate, has been found at Italica in Spain, at the opposite end of the Empire (commonly known as the *Aes Italicense* or *Senatus consultum de pretiis gladiatorum minuendis*: *CIL* 2.6278 = *ILS* 5163).¹⁸ Clearly, for documents relating to this legislation to be circulated so widely, it must have been felt to have universal significance. The purpose of capping the cost of gladiators is to boost the

¹⁷ Duncan-Jones 1990:166.

¹⁸ Oliver & Palmer 1955; Carter 2003.

pool of candidates available to occupy the office of priest of the imperial cult, a position that required the incumbent to put on gladiatorial displays. The unknown senator expresses the enthusiasm with which the motion was greeted by quoting a candidate verbatim (I.16-18): *quid mihi iam cum appellatione? omne onus quod patrimonium meum opprimebat sanctissimi imp. remiserunt. iam sacerdos esse et cupio et opto et editionem muneris, quam olim detestabamur, amplector.*

The inflationary costs of gladiators are clear from the *Aes Italicense*. But it is equally clear that the caps that it suggests are based upon a pre-existing hierarchy of gladiators, graded according to the *palus* system, combined with a ranking proposed by the *senatus consultum* that was based on the overall cost of the respective *munus*.¹⁹ So, if gladiators cost different amounts, would this not enable priests to achieve the ‘unobtrusive cost-cutting’ that Reynolds suggests? Three factors, I think, tell against this. One is public pressure for more magnificent – and bloodier – shows. Inscriptions claiming that a benefactor was first in his community (*primus omnium*) to exhibit a certain number of gladiators or a certain species of animal are legion,²⁰ and a monument such as the gruesome series of panels at Hierapolis in Phrygia comprising the memorial (ὑπόμνημα) of the troupe of gladiators, beast-hunters, and bull-baiters belonging to Cn. Arrius Apuleius, high priest of the imperial cult, and his wife, high priestess,²¹ leaves no doubt about the prestige associated with copious blood-letting.

The second factor is the unpredictability of the outcome of a gladiatorial bout, which can radically affect the cost. According to the jurist Gaius in the 2nd century AD, attempting to illustrate the difference between hire and purchase, the mark-up for gladiators who were maimed or killed was fifty times higher than if they were returned to barracks fit enough to fight again (*Inst.* 3.146: *item si gladiatores ea lege tibi tradiderim, ut in singulos, qui integri exierint, pro sudore denarii XX mihi darentur, in eos uero singulos, qui occisi aut debilitati fuerint, denarii mille, quaeritur, utrum emptio et uenditio an locatio et conductio contrahatur*). We know little about the restraints exercised by gladiators, or exercised upon them by referees, but severe injury must have been an ever-present risk and, combined with public pressure to see blood flow, it must have meant that the sponsor was trapped between reluctance to bankrupt himself and desire to enhance his reputation by sponsoring an unfettered fight.

Third, where beast displays are included, the very delivery of the animals, let alone their capacity to perform as required, is highly uncertain. Admit-

¹⁹ See the tables at Carter 2003:88 (prices per *munus*) and 97 (prices per *palus*).

²⁰ Mrozek 1971.

²¹ Ritti & Yilmaz 1998.

tedly, only gladiators (μονομάχοι) are mentioned in Hadrian's letter to Aphrodisias, but wild beast fighters are specifically attested there in the second or early third century and later,²² and may well have been a regular component of *munera* before that date without explicit mention being made of them; Pliny's somewhat patronizing letter to his friend Maximus at Verona, commiserating with the non-delivery of beasts (*Africanae*) for what he calls a *gladiatorium munus* in memory of Maximus's wife, makes such a point of stressing Maximus's generosity (*tam facilis tam liberalis in edendo fuisti*, *Epist.* 6.34.2) that it is clear that the suspicion of cost-cutting by dispensing with a beast-display was something to be avoided at all costs.

The funding of aqueducts

Granted that there are grounds for supposing that candidates for the priesthood at Aphrodisias might have been reluctant to shoulder the unpredictable and inflationary costs of sponsoring gladiatorial displays, why should they have preferred to contribute towards an aqueduct instead? As Joyce Reynolds has pointed out, while an aqueduct already seems to have been constructed at Aphrodisias – or at least its construction initiated – in the reign of Domitian, nevertheless the establishment of two new bath-buildings in the second century may well have required a new water-supply.²³ Further, the plethora of inscriptions commemorating benefactions to do with bathing-facilities and the water-supply in Roman cities testifies to the immense importance – and the immense undertaking – of constructing such facilities.²⁴

Depending upon its length, the type of labour used, and the challenges of the terrain (a construction *per loca [diffi]cilia amplissimo [su]mptu* is recorded at Dainium in Spain: *CIL* 2.5961),²⁵ the construction of an aqueduct was probably the most costly project that a city would have to undertake. An immensely wealthy man at Cirta in North Africa prompted his legal heirs to complain when he left his fortune to pay for an aqueduct (*Dig.* 22.6.9.5: *pecuniam quae ad opus aquae ductus data est, repeti et rem publicam ex corpore patrimonii sui impendere in id opus, quod totum alienae liberalitatis gloriam repraesentet*), but it was only rarely that a single individual, or even a single family, was rich

²² Roueché 1993:63-64 no. 15, 73 no. 44.

²³ Reynolds 2000:18.

²⁴ Eck 1987:72-73.

²⁵ Eck 1987:78-79.

enough to cover the cost, alone and unaided.²⁶ Of the surviving examples,²⁷ one that shows special foresight is a donation at Aurgi (Jaén) in Hispania Tarraconensis comprising a public bath, 37 hectares of woodland to provide the fuel to heat it, and an aqueduct to supply the water (*CIL* 2.3361 = *ILS* 5688). A certain Ti. Claudius Italicus spent two million *denarii* on building the aqueduct at Aspendos in Pamphylia (*IGRP* 3.804), and a man of senatorial rank, C. Iulius Pulcher Potamonianos (a suitable name, under the circumstances), made a ‘gift of an aqueduct’ (ὕδατος δωρεά) to a community of people called ‘Latorenoi’ outside Ephesos that is probably to be associated with the village of Latoreia.²⁸ Hadrian’s phrasing in our letter implies an *ab initio* construction, although repairs to the previous structure, themselves a benefaction worthy of epigraphic record, cannot be ruled out; for example, repairs to the reservoir associated with the aqueduct of the Latorenoi are celebrated as the gift of T. Flavius Athenagoras Cornelianus Furianus (also of senatorial rank), which was paid for by one Aphrodeisios, who was his slave (δοῦλος) and business agent (πραγματευτής).

From a remark in Pliny about the theatre at Nicaea, distinguishing *privatorum pollicitationes* from a previously mentioned sum that must represent public moneys,²⁹ we can infer that large public buildings could be funded from a combination of public funds (*Epist.* 10.39.1: *Theatrum, domine, Nicaea maxima iam parte constructum, imperfectum tamen, sestertium ... amplius centies hausit*) and multiple private sources (10.39.3: *huic theatro ex privatorum pollicitationibus multa debentur, ut basilicae circa, ut porticus supra caveam*). It is easy to imagine different ways in which the individual contribution to the cost of an aqueduct might be calculated: a round figure; an amount based upon the prognosis for the cost of a certain portion of its entire length; so many days’ labour; a certain quantity of stone; etc. An inscription from Apamea in Syria credits C. Iulius Agrippa, descended from the tetrarchs, with having had ‘several miles’ of an aqueduct built (ἱκανὰ μείλια); it is noteworthy that he did not construct its entire course.³⁰ An aqueduct 20 km. long between Gorze and Metz, in the Mosel valley, boasts an inscription near its terminal point at Metz recording that the transport of the water from its source, as well as the construction of a *nymphaeum*, was financed by several *seviri Augustales* (possibly four in all); scepticism has been expressed about the

²⁶ For the argument that very few public buildings of any type were funded by a single donor, see the study of munificence in Roman Asia Minor by Zuiderhoek 2005.

²⁷ Duncan-Jones 1974:85 n. 55.

²⁸ Beden & Malay 2004. On the use of ὕδωρ to mean ‘aqueduct’, see Jones 1991:112.

²⁹ Zuiderhoek 2005:172.

³⁰ *AE* 1976, 678; Leveau 1991:154.

ability of so few people to fund such a large project, but even though the inscription is fragmentary, the phrase *ab origine* is unambiguous, and we may have evidence for an aqueduct funded by corporate endeavour of officials of the imperial cult from, precisely, the reign of Hadrian.³¹

Priesthoods and other magistracies were an important source of regular civic revenue, because of the *summae honorariae* that the incumbents had to pay their city.³² Pliny records that the *summae honorariae* of new councillors at Claudiopolis in Bithynia were spent on new baths (*Epist.* 10.39.5); Septimius Severus permitted *summae honorariae* to be levied on holders of priesthoods at Lanuvium which were used to enlarge and renovate the baths there (*CIL* 14.2101 = *ILS* 5686). An aqueduct, however, was of a different order of magnitude. Sometimes it took the richest man in the world to build one: the emperor.³³ Judging from an inscription at Chagnon that ascribes to his authority a ban on ploughing, sowing, or planting immediately beside the aqueduct at Gier, Hadrian may have been responsible for the whole project, which supplied the important city of Lugdunum.³⁴ He certainly built aqueducts, or replaced old ones, across the width of the Empire: at Italica,³⁵ Gabii (*CIL* 14.2797), Cingulum (*CIL* 9.5681), Dyrr(h)achium (*CIL* 3.709),³⁶ Sarmizegetusa (*CIL* 3.1446), Argos in the Peloponnese,³⁷ Coronea in Boeotia

³¹ *CIL* 13.4325 = Burnand 1983:58 no. 6. The latter portion reads: [seviru]m Augustales aquam ab origin[e] | perduxeru[n]t (or: induxeru[n]t) et nymphaeum cum su[is] ornamentis | pon[en]dum curaveru[n]t. Scepticism is expressed by Leveau 1991:154. For the date, see Burnand 1983:58.

³² Duncan-Jones 1990:176-77.

³³ Eck 1987:72; Mitchell 1987:352-54; Fabre *et al.* 1992:69; Wilson 1996:18-19. In addition to epigraphic testimony, Wilson adduces the interesting argument that aqueducts built of *opus reticulatum*, which is extremely rare in the provinces, may be the work of Italian architects assigned by the emperor.

³⁴ *CIL* 13.1623 = *ILS* 5749 = Burnand 1983:57 no. 5: *Ex auctoritate | imp(eratoris) Caesaris Traian[us] Hadriani | Augusti nemini | arandi ser[en]di pang[en]diue ius | est intra id | spatium q[uo]d tute[lae] ductus | destinatum | est.* Cf. Burnand 1983:67 (stressing the status of Lugdunum); Wilson 1996:19 n. 106 (stressing that the phrase *ex auctoritate* does not merely describe the project as undertaken in the emperor's honour). This project is not included in the list compiled by Boatwright 2000:109.

³⁵ Dated on archaeological grounds to Hadrian's embellishment of his native city: see Canto 1979:334-36.

³⁶ The *aqua Hadriana* at Dyrr(h)achium (modern Durrës, in Albania) is also attested by the recent discovery of three inscribed lead pipes: cf. Freis 1983, 1985.

³⁷ The surviving fragments of the commemorative inscription have been heavily restored to record the construction of an aqueduct, on the basis that the numeral that terminates the inscription represents the stipulation of the width of the strip

(*SEG* 32.460), Corinth (Paus. 2.3.5, 8.22.3), Athens (*CIL* 3.549 = *ILS* 337), Caesarea in Judaea (*AE* 1928, 136), and Antioch in Syria (Malal. *Chron.* 11.14 = 277.20-278.19 Dindorf). At Alexandria Troas, he spent 12 million sesterces on an aqueduct; Herodes Atticus, outspending the emperor, donated another 16 million to finish it (Philostr. *Vit. soph.* 548-49).³⁸ Symbolic capital, too, could be garnered from such a donation: Aelius Aristides's fragmentary *Panegyric on the Water in Pergamon* was apparently composed for the dedication of the Madradağ aqueduct in the reign of Marcus Aurelius.³⁹ Maybe the citizens of Aphrodisias hoped that, by petitioning for permission to cancel the funding of gladiatorial spectacles and replace it with contributions to the aqueduct, they would spur Hadrian, in whose honour the spectacles would have been held, to offer to meet the shortfall for the aqueduct himself after all; were that the case, they were evidently disappointed. Nevertheless, by permitting the high priests to convert games in his honour into the durable amenity of an aqueduct, the emperor was indeed making a crucial, if indirect, contribution to the welfare of the city.

Conclusion

If candidates for the imperial priesthood at Aphrodisias in AD 125 ultimately preferred to contribute to an aqueduct rather than put on gladiatorial spectacles, they were sacrificing the fawning adulation of the spectators on the day itself and the likelihood of being voted an honorific statue afterwards, and gaining instead the gratitude of their fellow-citizens (or, at least, the more enlightened ones) for a crucial amenity, mention in the dedicatory inscription at the point of entry of the aqueduct into the city (often marked by a grand fountain⁴⁰), and a starring rôle in the celebration that sealed the accomplishment of the project (Aelius Aristides mentions 'all Asia celebrating with the Pergamenes', *πάσαν ὑμῖν τὴν Ἀσίαν συνεορτάζειν*,⁴¹ although for a project accomplished without the involvement of the emperor we should perhaps envisage a celebration of more restricted scope); and

reserved for the structure (as in the inscription from Chagnon, discussed above): see Vollgraff 1944-45:397-401.

³⁸ Mitchell 1987:346-47, postulating that Hadrian's donation was made by diverting taxes, rents, and dues levied upon the province of Asia; Boatwright 2000:116-18.

³⁹ Aelius Aristides presumably means a *συνθυσία*, a 'joint sacrifice' between the local community and guests invited from elsewhere: see Jones 1991:113. On the association between *συνθυσία* and imperial benefaction, see Jones 1998:183-84.

⁴⁰ Leveau 1991:157.

⁴¹ Jones 1991:113.

presumably they derived altruistic satisfaction from seeing that they had facilitated a project of obvious and continuing benefit to the community.

Pride in euergetism is ubiquitous in both the epigraphic and the literary record; disagreement about how it should be deployed, however, is seldom visible. The nature of our evidence, being largely epigraphic, records what people did and not what they chose not to do, which makes it hard to detect individuals who ‘opt out’ of the regular practices and institutions that prevailed in a Roman city. But it seems possible to read Hadrian’s letter to the people of Aphrodisias as early evidence of that same dissatisfaction with the liturgical burden of gladiatorial displays that led to the legislation of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus just over fifty years later and, ultimately, to the disgrace whereby a governor of Syria in the 4th century was forced to give the honour of producing a beast-show at Antioch to a citizen of Beroea (modern Aleppo), when he could not persuade a councillor in Antioch to undertake such a costly distinction as the Syriarchate (Liban. *Or.* 33.21).⁴² Finding gladiators so expensive as to strain their generosity may have caused some of the prominent citizens of Aphrodisias to welcome a contribution to their aqueduct instead.

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⁴² Liebeschuetz 1972:141-42.

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